

Parental Perceived Characteristics of Juvenile Mass Murderers

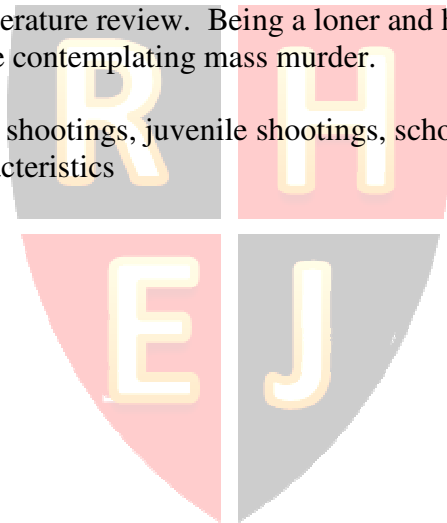
Holly J. Girard
Criminology Consultants, LLC

Erick Aguilar
iQuality, LLC

ABSTRACT

School mass murder shootings were practically unheard of prior to the 1980s. It is the purpose of this qualitative case study to explore what parents of teenagers believe are shared behaviors, social characteristics and personality traits of juveniles at risk of becoming mass murderer offenders. Being a loner or having social isolation was the primary characteristic determined by the parents. Psychiatric disorders, being angry, and being bullied were also named by over half of the parents. The primary information source that the parents said they obtained this information from was from the news media. This information did not match the information provided by the literature review. Being a loner and having psychiatric disorders are not characteristics of a juvenile contemplating mass murder.

Keywords: mass murder, mass shootings, juvenile shootings, school shootings, personality traits, juvenile disorders, social characteristics



Copyright statement: Authors retain the copyright to the manuscripts published in AABRI journals. Please see the AABRI Copyright Policy at <http://www.aabri.com/copyright.html>

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile mass murder in the form of school shootings is something the general public has become aware of through the media. The mass murder of students generates a great deal of media attention and publicity (Borum et al., 2010; Muschert, 2007). The media has a tendency to put forth sensationalized news stories in their competitive market (Duwe, 2000; Kupchik & Bracy, 2009). While the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2008) claimed the rates of school-associated homicide were low, the fear was disproportionately high, perhaps due to the media fanfare. With the newspaper headlines, television news reports, and other media coverage of school mass murder shootings like Columbine, Virginia Tech, or Sandy Hook, it is difficult for the average American to avoid hearing about it.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

School mass murder shootings such as the 1999 Columbine High shooting in Littleton, Colorado and the 2012 Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown, Connecticut have become more common in recent years. The fear surrounding such incidents has also increased (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008). One year after Columbine, a Gallop poll found that “two thirds of Americans believed that a similar incident was ‘very likely’ or ‘somewhat likely’ to happen in their community” (Borum et al., 2010, p. 27). Preventing such incidents has become a focus of many policy changes such as using metal detectors, video surveillance, zero tolerance policies, and armed security guards at high schools. Threat assessment by identifying students who are at risk of becoming school mass murder shooters has also come to the forefront in an effort to stop violence before it occurs.

The specific problem is that parents of teenagers are not looking for the right traits and behaviors in their kids to determine if a juvenile might become a potential juvenile mass murderer. This is problematic for society since potential mass murderers will be overlooked when the wrong traits are being viewed by this population that could have devastating consequences now. Those teens who are overlooked by their parents now may become mass murderers, just as the school mass murder shooters in the past have been overlooked.

Parents of teenagers, as most members of society, are subject to any influence the media has in forming perceptions. The media tends to focus on aspects that will sell and garner attention (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009). Parents are likely unaware of the most common behavioral denominators found in peer reviewed psychological research on the subject. The impact of this study was to determine what knowledge the parents have regarding behaviors and traits of juvenile mass murderers and whether or not this area could be improved upon. Results from this study will determine how prepared parents are at thwarting a school mass murder shooting based on their current knowledge of what constitutes a school mass murder shooter. This qualitative study explores the behaviors and traits of potential juvenile mass murderers as identified by parents of teenagers. The academic literature was used to gather possible variables the parents are likely to mention in their interviews. The general population for this study includes parents in the Titusville, Florida area.

The purpose of this qualitative method case study was to determine what behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits the parents of teenagers perceive to indicate a juvenile is at risk for becoming a mass murderer and where are they getting their information regarding such characteristics and traits that could lead to mass murder. Behaviors, social

characteristics, and personality traits of potential juvenile mass murderers will be generally defined as processes or actions that can be observed and measured or dispositional tendencies that influence behavior. The academic literature was used to gather possible variables the parents of teenagers are likely to mention in their interviews. In order to best achieve the purpose of this study, an exploratory qualitative multiple case study design was performed. Interviewing parents of teenagers in Titusville, Florida will identify what factors they look for when considering if a juvenile might become violent enough to kill at school. Perhaps parents are already looking for the right traits and behaviors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many possibilities as to why a juvenile would want to commit a school mass murder shooting. Bullying, anger, gun availability, mental health issues, narcissism, violent media influences, poor child rearing, and poor coping mechanisms are a few possibilities, although it is unlikely a single factor or cause is shared by these mass murderers. Multiple factors have been found to be going on at the time of school mass murder shootings by the perpetrator. In fact, many of these factors might be going on in the life of a juvenile whether they commit mass murder or not.

The Study of Juvenile Mass Murderers

Mass murder and school shootings have earned a great deal of attention in the past two decades. Prior to the 1960s, mass murder was a rare phenomenon in the United States (Duwe, 2004). Prior to the 1990s, scientists looking to study mass murder focused on public venues like workplaces, restaurants, and homes (Levin & Madfis, 2009). These were locations primarily chosen by adults. In the 1990s, several school shootings and mass murders were committed and the focus switched to understanding mass murder in the schools committed by juveniles. There was violence going on in the schools, but mass murder was rare or absent prior to the 1990s. Therefore, much of the information gathered on these events have occurred in the last 25 years.

Search Strategy

A review of academic research is reviewed at length in order to evaluate what studies have already been done in the area of juvenile mass murderers. Peer-reviewed books and published journal articles from psychological, social, medical, and criminal journals and databases make up the majority of referenced material. After a thorough review, any gaps in the research regarding the media or instructor knowledge were noted. Limitations in the studies will also be discussed to assist the reader in identifying these gaps.

The objective of this literature review is to present the background and studies available to compare the traits of juvenile mass murderers with the perception portrayed in the media and knowledge shown by parents. Mass media sources included newspaper and magazine articles. Parents of teenagers interviewed are those currently residing in Titusville, Florida.

Statistics

Since the media previously presented youth violence as primarily an issue among

inner-city African American males, the majority of society felt safe. Mass murder school shootings blew a hole in this view and stunned society. Articles in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and other resources fuel fears about school mass murder shootings by using emotion rather than being objective. It is appropriate to look at the statistics regarding school mass murders.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (2008) “during July 1999 – June 2006, a total of 116 school-associated homicides occurred among students and were associated with 109 events” (para. 4). Fox and Savage (2009) used data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports, the U.S. Department of Education, and detailed media reports and determined there were 76 homicides on college campuses between 2001 and 2005. Ignoring cases that did not involve students as perpetrators, Fox and Savage averaged only 10 per year; and most of these dealt with drug deals gone bad or acquaintance killings – not mass murder. Fox and Savage (2009) estimated that there were 14 incidents of mass shootings on college campuses between 1990 and 2008.

Reasons for Killing

The most common question asked by Americans who hear about a school mass murder shooting is why did this happen. The act seems so brutal and alien that it begs to question why it had to happen at all. Reason and civility seek to find a less hostile way of dealing with anger issues.

Determining the factors for a juvenile mass murder is difficult since the cause of violence is different in each instance. Strydom, and Esterhuysen (2005) itemized the causes into four categories: dispositional, historical, clinical, and contextual. Dispositional factors are those such as age, race, gender, socio-economic status, cognitive and neurological status. Historical factors would be violence, substance abuse, maladjustment, employment instability, and relationship problems. Clinical factors would study any psychiatric disorders or symptoms. Finally, contextual factors would look at the availability of professional supervision and support, access to weapons, and social stress.

Mental Health

Research indicates mass murderers are committed by regular individuals whom no one would have suspected (Bowen, 2007). However, many offenders have shown antisocial behaviors, anger, and depression prior to the event (Bowen, 2007). In fact, more than half of school mass murderers have experienced severe depression (Thio, Taylor, & Schwartz, 2012).

The likelihood that any offenders suffered from a mental health disorder appear to be just as well reflected as the general community. Approximately 15-25% of adolescents suffer from some sort of psychiatric illness such as conduct disorders, depressive disorders, developmental disorders, and schizophrenic disorders which can manifest in aggressive behavior (Lindberg, Oksanen, Sailas & Kaltiala-Heino, 2012). The disorder which most closely resembles a juvenile mass murderer is a conduct disorder, since Lindberg et al. (2012) describes it as when the juvenile has no sense of guilt, little empathy or emotion and callously manipulates others. The manifestation of conduct disorder is common in mass murderers.

Of those school mass murderers who are incarcerated for their acts, many suffer suicidal

impulses and serious depression. Unfortunately, the institutions in which school mass murderers are being held tend to be more punitive than rehabilitative. For those who will be released upon reaching adulthood or shortly thereafter, it makes for a frightening reality of individuals who need serious help with their mental health that are unlikely to seek treatment.

Bullying and Social Dynamics

The most accepted reason for mass murder school shootings is bullying (Hagen, Podlogar & Joiner, 2014; Newman, 2004). In Gerard, et al. (2016) study, school shooters were bullied or abused 54% of the time. The National Association of School Psychologists claimed approximately 160,000 children miss school each day in an effort to avoid bullying (Newman, 2004). The social hierarchy that exists in many schools is something the school mass murder shooters desire to undo since the shooters tend to exist at the bottom rung (Henry, 2009). To add insult to injury, it is common that those not involved in sports, academics, or other organizations are ostracized from most of the student body and become the object of ridicule or bullying (Klein, 2006). In the case of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the crime they committed was a “political stance” against the system that they felt victimized them (Larkin, 2009).

In many of the cases, bullying or being humiliated occurred with the shooters prior to the attacks (Newman et al., 2004). Some had been mercilessly teased, called derogatory names, had property stolen, were physically assaulted, or rejected by females. Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta and Roth’s (2004) research suggested that four out of five school shooting offenders had been socially outcast. Meloy, Hempel, Mohandie, Shiva, and Gray’s (2001) research suggested the majority of the adolescent mass murderers were usually victims of bullying although a few were the perpetrators. Leary, Kowalski, Smith, and Phillip’s (2003) research also suggested the majority of the school mass murder shooters had been socially rejected and many had a recent romantic rejection.

Although bullying may contribute to social marginalization and violence, it is not necessarily the cause for mass murder (Harding et al., 2002). Research indicates that many students have been bullied at least once, and many suffer bullying abuse and do not become school mass murderers (DeVoe & Murphy, 2011; Langman, 2009; Meloy et al., 2001). DeVoe and Murphy (2011) used the National Center for Education Statistics and found most students had been bullied at least once and 14% of students suffer trauma from their bullying. The question as to why some kids retaliate while most do not may be due to a combination of many factors.

Coping Mechanisms

Juveniles cope better with stress and issues when they have strong social relationships with others (Bernstein & Claypool, 2012; Fox & Levin, 1998). The bonds of society keep most of us from committing criminal acts. When youth struggle with social awkwardness and low self-esteem, they set themselves up for possible social isolation and exclusion (Bernstein & Claypool, 2012). Social exclusion can threaten both physical and mental health, as mentioned under bullying (Bernstein & Claypool, 2012; Eitle, 2010). The reason teens have difficulty with social skills and problem solving is their inexperience in using coping mechanisms or by having fewer options with which to cope (Eitle, 2010). An adult can leave a difficult situation like school or home, while a juvenile has limited means of escaping their present position (Eitle,

2010). Once a juvenile reaches adulthood and is able to have more options, there are less strains and less criminal behavior occurs. The adult also finds fewer reasons to remain around deviant peers.

Anger

Anger, resentment, and aggressive behavior are brought about through rejection (real or imagined), unrequited love, being ostracized, not feeling valued, public humiliation, bullying, and taunting. These feelings bring about frustration. Researchers have found that chronic frustration, like that brought on by a string of failures, will increase a person's likelihood to be angry and act in an aggressive manner (Levin & Madfis, 2009).

Experiencing strain or anger may distort an individual's attitudes and increase the likelihood of a violent response. Anger can lower a person's inhibitions and energize a person's desire for revenge (Agnew, 1992; Brezina, 2010). Anger tends to make people misinterpret the behavior of others as hostile and threatening; and this causes them to believe their own aggressive response is appropriate and justified (Breznia, 2010). Justification causes a sense of empowerment in that individual where violence becomes justified in the face of this betrayal, violation, or wrong the shooter may have perceived. The unresolved anger could lead to school mass murder shootings.

The brain areas that effect cognitive control, physiological arousal, and emotion regulation become more active during angry rumination (Denson, 2012). Angry rumination has a direct correlation with aggressive behavior. Angry rumination allows someone to mentally practice their vengeance and make it easier to harm others when they take physical steps to retaliate.

Likelihood for Violence

Those who committed mass murder school shootings were not traditionally violent or aggressive (Bender, Shubert, & McLaughlin, 2001). School mass murderers were not seen as school bullies or kids with disciplinary issues. Instead these are the shy and quiet ones who were shunned by their peers and have internalized their aggression until it explodes (Bender et al., 2001). Aggressive children also respond to their peer's aggression with an escalation of the conflict (Sexton-Radek, 2004). The homicidal act is one that demonstrates that the shooters do have power and they refuse to be treated poorly by their peers. These students are overlooked by their peers and by their teachers because they are quiet, anonymous, with acceptable grades, and they do not misbehave or stand out in any way (Bender et al., 2001). Affective aggression, accompanied by anger and fear are defensive forms of violence; compared with predatory aggression, which is a planned attack form of violence having little emotion (Meloy, 2012)

Statistical Reality of Similarities

Having looked at many of the reasons provided for why juveniles are committing mass murder, it is necessary to compare the possibilities and probabilities with the findings researchers have concluded based on the shooters researchers have been able to study Kidd and Meyer (2002) studied eight mass murder school shootings and found that prior to the events: seven of eight made verbal threats; seven of eight showed an interest in violent media, seven of eight had shown previous violent behavior, six of eight suffered from peer rejection, six of eight had

suicidal ideation, and six of eight had done violent writings.

In fact, their findings showed the shooter was usually a Caucasian male, above average student, does not necessarily use alcohol or illegal drugs, uses a gun owned by a family member, lacked emotional support from parents, dressed for the event, and suffered a recent loss or failure (Kidd & Meyer, 2002).

There are many factors that when linked together might be enough to push someone over the edge to commit a mass murder. Individually these factors do not weigh enough to make an individual feel the need to commit such a heinous crime, but compounded may be just enough for the right individual to act (Meloy et al., 2001; Palermo & Ross, 1999). It is typical for students to want meaningful social relationships with others. Those who cannot form these bonds become isolated, lack a support system, and therefore lean toward unconventional behavior.

School Insights

The media has suggested that mass murder school shooters are detached from their schools or seem uninvolved, however detachment is not usually the case (Langman, 2009). In reality, those involved in mass murder school shootings were above average academically (Langman, 2009).

After such tragedies as school mass murder shootings, people look for the warning signs that might have been overlooked, the signs that may have been misinterpreted which become clearer in hindsight. Teachers and other school staff are often put under a microscope for answers (Newman et al., 2004). As adults in a good position to see these warning signs, they might have been able to see problems arising in their students. In fact, in some instances, the victims' families sued teachers and administrators for their culpability (Newman et al., 2004).

Students may be aware of an impending threat but do not feel comfortable snitching on their peers (Fox et al., 2008). In Gerard et al. (2016) study of school mass murder shooters, 43% had told people at school of their plans or had made threats. The assault Jeff Weise planned for his high school was known by about 39 of his friends, but nobody told an adult (Fox et al., 2008). Had the students told a teacher or school administrator, the adult may have taken it seriously and acted upon the information or assumed it to be a hoax.

Profiling Issues

Profiling the typical mass murder school shooter can lead to unfairly labeling students who would never engage in an attack and missing those who do not fit the profile. The studies on shooting incidents conducted by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education "revealed no accurate or useful demographic or social profile of school attackers" (Borum et al., 2010 p. 29). School officials also have difficulty identifying the students most likely to start a school shooting with those who simply have general behavior problems in school. Multiple victim homicides at schools occur rarely, particularly when compared to single victim school homicides that tend to be related to gangs or drugs.

The focus needs to be on the motivation of the offenders and preventing the desire to start a massacre. Vossekuil et al. (2004) found that 81% of those they surveyed had revealed their deadly plans to at someone, while 59% informed even more than one person. In most

of these cases, someone, usually another student, knew about the attack prior to the event. A Finish study conducted in 2012 looked at 17 adolescents threatening a massacre online and 60 who made threats offline, with offline including: discussing it in a letter, essay, or exam or orally to a school peer, teacher or therapist (Lindberg et al., 2012). Lindberg et al. (2012) found that those who did it online were more of a threat as those offline had issues with impulse control and delinquency.

Vossekuil et al. (2004) found that many school mass murder shootings take place over less than 15 minutes. Reactive measures (i.e. emergency plans, resource officers) accomplish little as they have little chance to make a difference in such a short time period (Levin & Madfis, 2009). Proactive measures need to be taken instead, such as training teachers what factors to look for in their students.

METHODOLOGY

Juvenile mass murder is a problem for which qualitative case studies are appropriate. Obtaining research on the characteristics parents of teenagers are looking for in potential mass murderers could contribute to the development of training techniques or directions in which parents could better predict events. It is believed that many parents rely on information about school mass murder shooters retrieved from mass media than from actual training, and this information can be misleading.

Once the perceptions of the parents are identified, these perceptions can be compared to empirical data that identified characteristics of juvenile mass murderers by others. A future comparison will allow for an analysis of the accuracy of parents of teenagers in identifying juveniles that are at-risk for possible mass murder school shooting violence. Identifying what the parents are looking for is the first step in this future direction.

A qualitative research methodology was used to measure the knowledge and perception of juvenile mass murderers by parents of teenagers in Titusville, Florida. The literature review in the previous chapter outlines the empirical data available on behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits that have been identified in juvenile mass murderers. Qualitative research is undertaken to understand the beliefs, behavior and opinions of the study participants from their own perspective (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011).

With qualitative research methods, it is important to ask general questions subjectively in a setting comfortable to the participants. Participants were encouraged to be frank and open in order to allow for ease of communication with the researcher. It was crucial that a rapport was established between the researcher and the participants. Probes for responses were neutral in nature, to ensure that the researcher did not affect the nature of the responses (Maxfield & Babbie, 2017). Qualitative methods emphasize the researcher's role as an active participant in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This researcher was a key instrument in data collection and interpretation of data (Stake, 1995).

A quantitative method would not be appropriate for this study. Quantitative method attempts to test a hypothesis using independent and dependent variables, and analyzing variables using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative aspects of parents of teenagers' beliefs is the target of this research, as their trait assumptions were looked at compared to the traits and behaviors of past school mass murderers. Using qualitative method allowed for learning traits identified from study participants and representing these

traits as themes in the research.

The primary way qualitative researchers gather data is through interviews. To gather data from parents of teens in Titusville, Florida, the parents were approached directly via e-mail to request participation. First the interviewer contacted potential interviewees known to her. She knew of eight parents of teenagers in the Titusville, Florida area. After speaking with each of these eight, they agreed to participate in the research and to provide names of other potential interviewees they knew personally. This way of finding participants has been described as snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a recruitment technique in which participants identify other potential subjects for use in the study. In this study, snowball sampling was used after convenience sampling. It originally emerged as an approach for hard-to-reach populations or situations that are challenging for outsiders to access (Heckathorn, 2011). The researcher contacted and requested to interview each of these recommendations. The researcher found out the best times and days to conduct the interviews. The interviews occurred over a two-month period from June through July.

Prior to the interview, an introduction of what is expected and permission to conduct the interview was discussed. Each participant was asked if it was permissible to use a digital recorder to capture the discussion. The interviewer went over specific definitions for the following terms: behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits. Parents of teenagers were then asked to discuss the behaviors, traits, and social characteristics they believe juveniles who may become mass murderers might exhibit.

Data Collection

This is a qualitative research study with the goal of determining what traits and characteristics parents of teenagers in Titusville, Florida believe are held by juveniles who might commit mass murder. Information from empirical research available to the public was utilized to determine the characteristics of a juvenile mass murderer in order to create a juvenile mass murder profile. The interviews with parents of teenagers provided a similar list of characteristics of a potential juvenile mass murderer. Interviews were the primary data collection instrument. The interviews were conversational and open-ended to build a rapport with the participants. Interviews with open-ended questions are recommended to find patterns or common themes. Open-ended interview questions permitted the participants to respond freely without researcher probing. It also assisted in keeping the researcher's personal opinions to influence the study results by keeping the researcher as a listener and observer. Qualitative researchers use in-depth semi-structured interviews to understand beliefs and experiences of the subjects for data collection (Creswell, 2008).

Prior to the commencement of the 15 interviews, informed consent was obtained from each participant. Using the interview script, interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, risks and benefits of participation, and withdrawal. Each participant said they understood and the interviews commenced.

During the interviews, study participants shared their opinions and views. The interviewer did not interject any personal views or opinions and only prodded the participants on by saying "okay." Occasionally, either prior to the formal interviews or directly afterward, general talk occurred related to work or social events. It is believed that these introductory conversations created a rapport between the investigator and the participant which helped make the study participants feel more comfortable to share their knowledge and opinion (Creswell,

2008; Neuman, 2006).

The interviews used a qualitative method of inquiry and single case study research design. A qualitative approach is one in which questions are asked, data is analyzed and grouped into themes, and interpretations are made of the data (Creswell, 2009). The case study is focused on one group: Titusville, Florida parents of teenagers. It is exploratory because it is not testing a hypothesis and the subject being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes (Yin, 2009).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was launched to ensure there was clarity in the open-ended interview questions. The pilot study also ensured there was thoroughness in the researcher's data collection method. The pilot study participants were asked after the interview to assess the questions, their composition, and whether or not the interview questions would produce the data required for the study. Two pilot interviews were conducted with participants that both fit the criteria of the study and were well versed in studies. They both had masters degrees and jobs as college instructors. They assisted in determining if there were flaws in the interview design, validity in the interview questions, and whether the questions were easy to comprehend for future participants. If the pilot study participants had found any weaknesses within the interview design it would have allowed the researcher time to make revisions prior to conducting more interviews. Since the pilot interviews yielded no issues, the researcher made no changes to the questionnaire. The results of the pilot study confirmed that the instrument captured essential information required to complete the research.

Data Analysis

A qualitative exploratory research design was appropriate for this case study due to the literature gap regarding the perceived traits and behaviors of students who might become mass murderers from the parents of teenagers' perspective. Qualitative data is about words and their meanings rather than about quantifiable phenomena. The data is collected on a few cases rather than on many. The categories were guessed from the literature and after the interviews were completed, the phenomenon was then known. The phenomenon are the behaviors, personality traits, and social characteristics deemed most important by the parents.

Yin (2009) recommended an analytic technique for qualitative case studies:

1. Categorizing information in various classifications,
2. Conducting a matrix of arrangements and classifying the evidence in these arrangements,
3. Developing visual stimulants such as diagrams to depict data,
4. Organizing data based on frequency, and
5. Reviewing the complexity of data and thereby organizing data in a methodical order.

Using open-ended questions allowed for a wide variety of answers. When multiple participants gave similar answers, categories or coded patterns arose. Deductive codes were taken from the information retrieved in the literature review. Inductive codes came from the issues raised by participants that the researcher did not account for. The transcribed interviews were gone through line by line to interpret the data and code it. Cross-case comparisons were made to tighten and reinterpret the coding.

Coding and analyzing the data continued with each interview. The parents interviewed

had different viewpoints and came up with various traits. As each interview was transcribed and coded, information was compared to previous interviews. Interviews were conducted until no new insights were made (theoretical saturation). At this point, the behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits most looked for by parents of teenagers regarding juveniles presented itself. Demographics were analyzed and compared as well to see if any patterns began to emerge.

FINDINGS

The purpose of the research was to determine what parents of teenagers believe are shared behaviors, social characteristics and personality traits of juveniles at risk of becoming mass murderer offenders. This agenda was met by exploring the opinions of 15 parents of teens in Titusville, Florida. Data gathered from interviews was analyzed, categorized, and refined into themes.

One of the first questions the parents of teens were asked was if they had received any type of training regarding what characteristics a juvenile contemplating mass murder might possess. Across the board, the parents said they had received no training. Receiving no training was also the case when the parent worked as a teacher, as four of the participants were. The training reflected what to do if there is an active shooter on campus, such as bar the door, but no training in what characteristics a potential shooter might possess.

The primary question in this study was broken down into three parts. The question was: what are behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits that parents perceive to indicate a teenager is at risk for becoming a mass murderer? Behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits were each formed into their own questions during the interview, so as not to overwhelm those interviewed. It was also determined during the pilot study that definitions needed to be provided to the participants in order to better understand the individual components. Behaviors, personality traits and social characteristics can become confused if not properly defined.

Information Resources

All of those interviewed mentioned obtaining information regarding school mass murder shooters from television or news programs. Social media, like Facebook, was mentioned by 80% of the participants. A high percentage was expected because studies have shown that social media is playing a larger role in how Americans are obtaining their news and information. Personal opinion made up over 25% of the participants' information. This means that the parents had preconceived notions and ideas about the topic that they claimed they could not pinpoint where these ideas came from. Even with additional probing, the parents could not determine where they obtained their opinion. The remaining sources, like newspapers, radio, books, and magazines made up less than 15% each. Table 8 illustrates where the participants said they obtained information regarding the traits they believed juvenile mass murderers portray.

The final question posed to the participants was which of the traits and behaviors they previously mentioned during the interview was the most important. The interviewer would read off a list of all the characteristics and traits they had previously mentioned in the interview to remind them of the ones they stated. Of all the items they mentioned, one factor was requested that the parents believe stands out the most for determining who will become a juvenile mass

murderer. The 15 participants mentioned a total of eight items, with psychiatric disorders, anger, and social isolation having a three-way tie at 20% on being the most important characteristic. These three characteristics were followed by being bullied. The other most important characteristics mentioned included: authority issues, changes in behavior, suicidal tendencies, and indifference toward others. Table 9 illustrates what the participants believed were the most important trait or behavior in a juvenile that might commit mass murder.

Social Characteristics

There were four themes that emerged as a result of the interviews with parents of teens. The first theme that emerged was that parents believe juveniles who are likely to commit mass murder tend to be loners or have some form of social isolation. The loner theme was echoed by almost all of the participants in the study. It is typical for students to want meaningful social relationships with others. Those who cannot form these bonds become isolated, lack a support system, and therefore lean toward unconventional behavior. College students must move away from their support systems and find new ones; therefore, social isolation is common. This could be the beginning of strain theory's explanation of someone who may commit a school mass murder. However, with social isolation being so common among teenagers, it is unlikely that isolation alone is a good indicator of a future mass murderer.

The second theme that emerged from the study was that parents believe juveniles who are likely to commit mass murder tend to be bullied by others. Being bullied was mentioned by 11 of the 15 parents interviewed. The most accepted reason for school mass murders is bullying (Newman, 2004). In many of the cases, bullying or being humiliated occurred with the shooters prior to the attacks (Newman et al., 2004). The social hierarchy that exists in many schools is something the school mass murderers desire to undo since the shooters tend to exist at the bottom rung (Henry, 2009). Several research studies have shown that the majority of the adolescent mass murderers were usually victims of bullying. The U.S. Secret Service (2002) has stated that 71% of shooters in school mass murders were bullied. Accordingly, this theme appears to be in line with the research and is something parents should feel is a good indicator of possible future violence like school mass murders.

Personality Traits

The third theme that emerged from this study was that parents believe juveniles who are likely to commit mass murder tend to be angry and have frustration or resentment. The anger theme was echoed by over 50% of the study participants. Anger is directly related to strain theory. Experiencing strain or anger may distort an individual's attitudes and increase the likelihood of a violent response. Unresolved anger could lead to school mass murder shootings. Larkin (2009) mentioned the Columbine shooting set a media template of understanding for students: school mass murder shootings occur when a student wants to seek revenge. So, the anger theme is also in line with being a fairly good indicator of school mass murder violence.

The fourth theme that emerged from this study was that parents believe juveniles who are likely to commit mass murder tend to have issues with their mental health. They either have a psychiatric disorder or suffer from depression. The mental health theme was mentioned by over half of the study participants. The media also tends to harp on mental illness as an indicator of future violence. One participant, Parent 11, felt that the media and others were wrong in this

assumption. The research is mixed because it indicates mass murderers are committed by regular individuals whom no one would have suspected (Bowen, 2007; Ferguson, 2011). The likelihood that any offenders suffered from a mental health disorder appear to be just as well reflected as the general community. However, many offenders have shown antisocial behaviors, anger, and depression prior to the event (Bowen, 2007). In fact, more than half of school mass murderers have experienced severe depression (Thio, Taylor, & Schwartz, 2012). So, depression rates may be high in school mass murderers, but other mental health disorders appear to be negligent.

Behavioral Traits

Behavioral traits were seldom mentioned by the parents of teens as being indicators of a juvenile likely to commit school mass murder shooting violence. Behavioral traits like delinquency, substance abuse, violent media obsessions, poor grades, and issues with authority were pointed out by 20% or less of the parents. The main focus appeared to be on social characteristics and personality traits.

This study's findings can help identify risk factors that parents are not considering which need to be addressed in order to reduce the problem of mass murder school shootings (Booth, Van Hasselt & Vecchi, 2011). The Secret Service and the Department of Education found that 75% of the school mass murder shooters shared their intentions to a friend prior to the attack, had previously threatened to commit suicide, and had been a cause of concern to an adult prior to the attack (Borum et al., 2010). These factors were not mentioned by the parents of teens. The Secret Service also shared that 78% of those who committed mass murder school shootings were suicidal (U.S. Secret Service, 2002). Suicide was only mentioned as a factor by three of the parents in this study. Another factor the U.S. Secret Service (2002) discovered was that 93% of the shooters had perceived a loss prior to the attack. Unfortunately, perceiving a loss was not mentioned by any of the parents in this study.

Information Obtained

The second part of this study was to determine where the parents getting their information regarding such characteristics and traits that could lead to mass murder. All of the parents who were interviewed in this study mentioned obtaining information regarding school mass murder shooters from television or news programs. Obtaining information from the media follows the trend in the United States since the majority of the public get their primary source of crime information from the televised media (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2012). Social media, like Facebook, was mentioned by 80% of the participants. The news is distorted by biases or hidden agendas of the companies who choose what information to report and which to withhold from the public (Altheide, 2009). The media has portrayed school violence in such a way to cause a panic. The news media has changed both the public and the academic world's views on mass murder (Duwe, 2005). This change creates a gap in the literature similar to the gap in the public's perception.

The specific problem is that parents of teenagers are not looking for the right traits and behaviors in their kids to determine if a juvenile might become a potential mass murderer. Parents are unaware of the most common behavioral denominators found in peer reviewed psychological research on the subject. This lack of knowledge is problematic for society since potential mass murderers will be overlooked when the wrong traits are being viewed by this

population that could have devastating consequences now. Those teens who are overlooked by their parents now may become mass murderers, just as the school mass murder shooters in the past have been overlooked.

DISCUSSION

The primary characteristic determined by parents to be a trait of juveniles at risk for becoming a school mass murderer was being a loner or having social isolation. Being a loner is a theme echoed by the media as several attacks were perpetrated by lone gunmen. However, there have been several school mass murder shootings where there were two teens doing the shooting, such as the Pinellas Point shooting in 1988, the Westside Middle School shooting in 1998, and the Columbine shooting in 1999. Many of the shooters also had an active social life in school and were not considered loners. The Secret Service (2002) have stated that 41 percent of attackers socialized as mainstream students. It seems that the myth of isolation has been perpetuated by the news media and has continued for decades. Unfortunately, it just doesn't appear to be true.

Psychiatric disorders were another characteristic named by the parents as being a trait of potential school mass murderers. It is true that some offenders have shown antisocial behaviors, anger, and depression prior to the event, but research indicates mass murderers are committed by regular individuals whom no one would have suspected (Bowen, 2007). While it may be argued by some that there has to be mental illness in anyone who would be willing to commit a mass murder, the likelihood that any offenders suffered from a mental health disorder appear to be just as well reflected as the general community. Approximately 15-25% of adolescents suffer from some sort of psychiatric illness such as conduct disorders, depressive disorders, developmental disorders, and schizophrenic disorders which can manifest in aggressive behavior (Lindberg, Oksanen, Sailas & Kaltiala-Heino, 2012). While it is possible for a school mass murderer to display mental health issues, it does not appear to be the norm.

Being angry was another characteristic named by the parents as being a trait of potential school mass murderers. Studies have determined that predatory aggression is what is seen in mass murderers (Meloy, 2012). These juveniles who are willing to commit mass murder have predatory aggression in common. They have let their anger build up to a point that it becomes predatory aggression. In this instance, the parents are correct: Anger is a trait that is generally seen in juveniles likely to become school mass murderers. However, just because someone is angry does not mean they are likely to lash out in a manner of mass murder.

Finally, being bullied was another characteristic named by the parents as being a trait of potential school mass murderers. The most accepted reason for school mass murder shootings is bullying (Hagen, Podlogar & Joiner, 2014). Meloy, Hempel, Mohandie, Shiva, and Gray's (2001) research suggested the majority of the adolescent mass murderers were usually victims of bullying although a few were the perpetrators. In Gerard et al. (2016) study, school mass murderers were bullied or abused 54% of the time. However, the National Association of School Psychologists claimed approximately 160,000 children miss school each day in an effort to avoid bullying (Newman, 2004). While being bullied is a likely characteristic of juveniles who might become a school mass murderer, those who have been bullied are not all likely to become school mass murderers or there would be more mass murdering offenders in schools.

All of the participants in this study stated that they received no training in what to look for in a possible school mass murderer. Receiving no training included participants that have worked

as teachers and police officers. Some type of training should be made available to people who work in these fields and have contact with juveniles.

All of the parents who were interviewed in this study mentioned obtaining information regarding mass murder school shooters and mass murderers from television or news programs. This follows the trend in the United States since the majority of the public get their primary source of crime information from the televised media (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2012). Social media, like Facebook, was mentioned by 80% of the participants. Even though a substantial amount of scholarly articles on school mass murders began to be produced after Columbine, only one participant mentioned referring to a scholarly article to obtain their information on juvenile mass murderers.

The news is distorted by biases or hidden agendas of the companies who choose what information to report and which to withhold from the public (Altheide, 2009). The media has portrayed school violence in such a way to cause a panic. The news media has changed both the public and the academic world's views on mass murder (Duwe, 2005). This change creates a gap in the literature similar to the gap in the public's perception.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this qualitative method case study was to explore what behaviors, social characteristics, and personality traits the parents perceive to indicate a student is at risk for becoming a mass murderer and where are they getting their information regarding such characteristics and traits that could lead to mass murder. Interviews were conducted with 15 parents of teenagers in Titusville, Florida using a qualitative method of inquiry and research design via in-person interviews. The information collected in the interviews was analyzed for common themes to determine if there are gaps in the parents' perception.

Being a loner or having social isolation was the most likely characteristic determined by the parents. Psychiatric disorders, being angry, and being bullied were also named by over half of the parents. The primary information source that the parents said they obtained this information from was from the news media. News media are not just there to inform the public, but to generate revenue. Parents need a more reliable source of information to turn to when it comes to determining what characteristics juvenile potential mass murderers portray prior to an event.

Future studies can build upon this study by comparing the responses of parents of teens with the actual characteristics and traits potential mass murderers show. Doing this comparison will help educators focus on the real characteristics that need to be taught particularly if that person is an educator or police officer or in some other field where they interact with teens often. Knowing what to look for is the first step in prevention of juvenile mass murder.

REFERENCES

- Agnew, R. (1992). Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency. *Criminology*, 30(1), 47-87.
- Agnew, R. (1997). Stability and change in crime over the life course: A strain theory Explanation. *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*, 7(1), 101-132.
- Agnew, R. (2006). *Pressured into crime: An overview of general strain theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing.
- Agnich, L. E. (2015). A comparative analysis of attempted and completed school-based mass murder attacks. *American Criminal Justice*, 40(1), 1-22.
- Aitken, L., Oosthuizen, P., Emsley, R., & Seedat, S. (2008). Mass murders: Implications for mental health professionals. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 38(3), 261-9. doi: 10.2190/PM.38.3.c.
- Altheide, D. L. (2009). The Columbine shootings and the discourse of fear. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), 1354-1370. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332552.
- American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, 63(1), 852-862.
- Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2002). The effects of media violence on society. *Science*, 295(1), 2377.
- Ang, R. P., & Yusof, N. (2005). The relationship between aggression, narcissism, and self-esteem in Asian children and adolescents. *Current Psychology*, 24(2), 113-122.
- Auxemery, Y. (2015). The mass murderer history: Modern classifications, sociodemographic and psychopathological characteristics, suicidal dimensions, and media contagion of mass murderers. *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 56(1) 149-154.
- Barrios, L. C. (2000). Federal activities addressing violence in schools. *Journal of School Health*, 70(4), 119.
- Bartol, C. R., & Bartol, A. M. (2011). *Criminal behavior: A psychological approach*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bender, W. N., Shubert, T. H., & McLaughlin, P. J. (2001). Invisible kids: Preventing school violence by identifying kids in trouble. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 37(2), 105-111. doi: 10.1177/105345120103700206.
- Bernstein, M. J., & Claypool, H. M. (2012). Social exclusion and pain sensitivity: Why exclusion sometimes hurts and sometimes numbs. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(2), 185-196. doi: 10.1177/0146167211422449.
- Birkland, T. A., & Lawrence, R. G. (2009). Media framing and policy change after columbine. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), 1405-1425. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332555.
- Blum, D. & Jaworski, C. G. (2016). From suicide and strain to mass murder. *Society*, 53(4), 408-413.
- Booth, B., Van Hasselt, V. B., & Vecchi, G. M. (2011). Addressing school violence. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 80(5), 1-9.
- Borum, R., Cornell, D. G., Modzeleski, W., & Jimerson, S. R. (2010). What can be done about school shootings?: A review of the evidence. *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 27. doi: 10.3102/0013189X09357620.

- Bowen, K. N. (2007). The perception and knowledge of serial and mass murder between officers at the Arlington police department and criminology and criminal justice students at the University of Texas at Arlington. University of Texas.
- Boyd, B. R. (2011). *Mass murder in the new millennium: A thesis restructuring mass murder typologies*. Ann Arbor, MI: Proquest.
- Brezina, T. (2010). Anger, attitudes, and aggressive behavior: Exploring the affective and cognitive foundations of angry aggression. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 26(2), 186-203. doi: 10.1177/1043986209359849.
- Bushman, B., & Anderson, C. (2001). Media violence and the American public. *American Psychologist*, 56(6/7), 477-489. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.56.6-7.477.
- Bushman, B. J. (1998). Priming effects of media violence on the accessibility of aggressive constructs in memory. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(5), 537.
- Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(5), 545-547.
- Cawthorne, N. (2009). *Spree killers: Devastating massacres by unpredictable gunmen*. New York, NY: MJF Books.
- CBC News. (2012, December 14). 20 children among dead in Connecticut school massacre. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/20-children-among-dead-in-connecticut-school-massacre-1.1134782>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008). School-associated student homicides – United States, 1992-2006. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5702a1.htm>
- Chalmers, P. (2009). *Inside the mind of a teen killer*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- CNN. (2012, December) Sandy hook shooting: What happened? Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2012/12/us/sandy-hook-timeline/index.html>.
- Common Sense Media (2015). Landmark report: U.S. teens use an average of nine hours of media per day, tweens use six hours. Retrieved from: <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/about-us/news/press-releases/landmark-report-us-teens-use-an-average-of-nine-hours-of-media-per-day>.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cornell, D. G. (2006). *School violence: Fear verses facts*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- Coyne, S. M. (2007). Does media violence cause violent crime? *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 13(1), 205-211. doi: 10.1007/s10610-007-9044-5.
- Cramer, C. (1993). Ethical problems of mass murder coverage in the mass media. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 9(1), 26-42.
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative research design: Choosing among five approaches*, (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A. & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 11(100). Retrieved from <https://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2288-11-100.pdf>

- Davey, G. (2006). *Encyclopaedic dictionary of psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- DeLisi, M. (2002) The Columbine high school massacre and criminal justice system response: An exploratory case study. *The Social Science Journal*, 39(1), 19.
- DeKeseredy W. & Dragiewicz, M. (2012). *Media and Crime in the Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Denson, T. F. (2012). The multiple systems model of angry rumination. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 17(1), 1-21. doi: 10.1177/1088868312467086.
- DeVenanzi, A. (2012). School shootings in the USA: Popular culture at risk, teen marginality, and violence against peers. *Crime media culture*, 8(3), 261-278. doi: 10.1177/1741659012443233.
- DeVoe, J. & Murphy, C. (2011). Student reports of bullying and cyber-bullying: Results from the 2007 school crime supplement to the national crime victimization survey. National Center for Education Statistics: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011316.pdf> - PDF
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-5. 5th ed. (2013). Arlington, Va.: American Psychiatric Association.
- Duwe, G. (2000). Body-count journalism: The presentation of mass murder in the news media. *Homicide Studies*, 4(4), 364. doi: 10.1177/1088767900004004004.
- Duwe, G. (2004). The patterns and prevalence of mass murder in twentieth-century America. *Justice Quarterly*, 21(4), 729-761.
- Duwe, G. (2005). A circle of distortion: The social construction of mass murder in the United States. *Western Criminology Review* 6(1), 59-78.
- Duwe, G. (2007). *Mass murder in the United States: A history*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Eitle, D. (2010). General strain theory, persistence, and desistance among young adult males. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(6), 1113-1121. doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2010.08.003.
- Fast, J. (2008). *Ceremonial violence: A psychological explanation of school shootings*. New York, NY: The Overlook Press.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2005). Uniform crime reports: Crime in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing office.
- Ferguson, C. J. (2011). Video games and youth violence: A prospective analysis in adolescents. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 40(4), 377-391.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Follman, M. (2015, October). How the media inspires mass shooters. Mother Jones. Retrieved from: <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/10/media-inspires-mass-shooters-copycats/>.
- Fossati, A., Borroni, S., Eisenberg, N., & Maffei, C. (2010). Relations of proactive and reactive dimensions of aggression to overt and covert narcissism in nonclinical adolescents. *Aggressive Behavior*, 36(1), 21-27. doi: 10.1002/1b.20332.
- Fox, J., Roeg, L., & Salerno, R. (Producers), & Ramsay, L. (Director). (2011). *We need to talk about Kevin* [Motion picture]. United Kingdom: BBC Films.
- Fox, J. A., & Levin, J. (1998). Multiple homicide: Patterns of serial and mass murder. *Crime and justice: A review of research*, 23. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fox, J. A., Levin, J. & Quinet, K. (2008). *The will to kill: Making sense of senseless murder* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

- Fox, J. A. & Savage, J. (2009). Mass murder goes to college: An examination of changes on college campuses following Virginia tech. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), 1465-1485. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332558.
- Frymer, B. (2009). The media spectacle of columbine: Alienated youth as an object of fear. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), 1387-1404. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332554.
- Ferguson, C. (2011). Psychological profiles of school shooters: Positive directions and one big wrong turn. *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations* 11(2), 1-17. doi: 10.1080/15332586.2011.581523.
- Gerard, F. J., Whitfield, K. C., Porter, L. E. & Browne, K. D. (2016). Offender and offence characteristics of school shooting incidents. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, 13(1), 22-38. doi:10.1002/jip.1439.
- Girard, C. (1993). Age, gender, and suicide: A cross-national analysis. *American Sociological Review*, 58(1), 553-574.
- Gould, M., Jamieson, P., & Romer, D. (2003). Media contagion and suicide among the young. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 46(9), 1269-1284. doi: 10.1177/0002764202250670.
- Gould, M. S., Wellenstein, S., Kleinman, M., O'Carroll, P., & Mercy, J. (1990). Suicide clusters: An examination of age-specific effects. *American Journal of Public Health*, 80(1) 211-212.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82. doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903.
- Hagen, C. R., Podlogar, M. C. & Joiner, T. E. (2014). Murder-suicide: Bridging the gap between mass murder, amok, and suicide. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research* 7(3) 179-186.
- Harding, D. J., Fox, C., & Mehta, J. D. (2002). Studying rare events through qualitative case studies: Lessons from a study of rampage school shootings. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 31(2), 174. doi: 10.1177/004912410203100203.
- Heckathorn, D. (2011). Snowball versus respondent-driven sampling. *Social Methodol*, 41(1), 355-366. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9531.01244.x.
- Heller, L. & Manulis, J. B. (Producers), & Kalvert, S. (Director). (1995). *Basketball Diaries* [Motion picture]. United States: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer & New line cinema.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Henry, S. (2009). School violence beyond columbine: A complex problem in need of an interdisciplinary analysis. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(9), 1246-1265. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332544.
- Hokoda, A, DelCamp, M. A. M., & Ulloa, E. C. (2012). Age and gender differences in teen relationship violence. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 21(3). 351.
- Holmes, R. M., & Holmes, S. T. (2001). *Mass murder in the United States*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- JeeHae H. L. (2013). School Shootings in the U.S. Public Schools: Analysis through the eyes of an educator. *Review of Higher Education & Self-Learning*, 6(22), 88-119.
- Kalish, R., & Kimmel, M. (2010). Suicide by mass murder: Masculinity, aggrieved entitlement, and rampage school shootings. *Health Sociology Review*, 19(4), 451.

- Kaminski, R. J., Koons-Witt, B. A., Thompson, N. S., & Weiss, D. (2010). The impacts of the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University shootings on fear of crime on campus. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 38*(1), 88-98. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2009.11.011.
- Kaufman, J. M. (2009). Gendered responses to serious strain: The argument for a general strain theory of deviance. *Justice Quarterly, 26*(3), 410-444. doi: 10.1080/07418820802427866.
- Keaton, D., Wolf, D., & LeRoy, J. T. (Producers) & Van Sant, G. (2003). *Elephant* [Motion picture]. United States: HBO films.
- Kelleher, M. D. (1998). *When good kids kill*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Kidd, S. T., & Meyer, C. L. (2002). Similarities of school shootings in rural and small town communities. Marshall University. Retrieved from http://www.marshall.edu/jrcp/sp2002/similarities_of_school_shootings.htm
- Kiilakoski, T., & Oksanen, A. (2011). Soundtrack of the school shootings: Cultural script, music and male rage. *Young, 19*(3), 247-269. doi: 10.1177/110330881101900301.
- Kimmel, M. S., & Mahler, M. (2003). Adolescent masculinity, homophobia, and violence. *American Behavioral Scientist, 46*(1), 1439-1449.
- King, S. (1999, May 26). The bogeyboys. Keynote address to Vermont library conference VEMA annual meeting. Retrieved from <http://www.stephen-king.de/stephen-king/interviews/28-stephen-kings-keynote-address.html>
- Klein, J. (2006). Cultural capital and high school bullies: How social inequality impacts school violence. *Men and Masculinities, 9*(1), 53-75. doi: 10.1177/1097184X04271387.
- Klein, J. (2005). Teaching her a lesson: Media misses boys' rage relating to girls in school shootings. *Crime Media Culture, 1*(1), 90. doi: 10.1177/1741659005050245.
- Klofas, J. (2009). Summary of research on mass murder. Center for Public Safety Initiatives. Retrieved from <http://www.rit.edu/cla/cpsi/WorkingPapers/2009/2009-11.pdf>
- Kostinsky, S., Bixler, E. O., & Kettl, P. A. (2001). Threats of school violence in Pennsylvania after media coverage of the columbine high school massacre: Examining the role of imitation. *Archives of Pediatrics Adolescent Medicine, 155*(9), 994-1001.
- Kupchik, A., & Bracy, N. L. (2009). The news media on school crime and violence. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 7*(2), 136-155. doi: 10.1177/1541204008328800.
- Langman, P. (2009). *Why kids kill: Inside the minds of school shooters*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Lankford, A. (2013). A comparative analysis of suicide terrorists and rampage, workplace and school shooters in the united states from 1990 to 2010. *Homicide Studies, 17*(3), 1-20. doi: 10.1177/1088767912462033.
- Larkin, R. W. (2009). The columbine legacy: Rampage shootings as political acts. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52*(9), 1309-1326. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332548.
- Leary, M. R., Kowalski, R. M., Smith, L., & Phillips, S. (2003). Teasing, rejection, and violence: Case studies of the school shootings. *Aggressive Behavior, 29*(3), 202-214. doi: 10.1002/ab.10061.
- Leavy, P., & Maloney, K. P. (2009). American reporting of school violence and 'people like us': A comparison of newspaper coverage of the columbine and red lake school shootings. *Critical Sociology, 35*(2), 273-292. doi: 10.1177/089696920508099195.
- Lester, D. (2010). Review: Suicide in mass murderers and serial killers. *Suicidology Online, 1*, 19-27.

- Levin, J., & Madfis, E. (2009). Mass murder at school and cumulative strain: A sequential model. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(9), 1227-1245. doi: 10.1177/0002764209332543.
- Lickel, B., Schmader, T., & Hamilton, D. L. (2003). A case of collective responsibility: Who else was to blame for the columbine high school shootings? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(2), 194-204. doi: 10.1177/0146167202239045.
- Lindberg, N., Oksanen, A., Sailas, E., & Kaltiala-Heino, R. (2012). Adolescents expressing school massacre threats online: Something to be extremely worried about? *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 6(39), 1-8. doi: 10.1186/1753-2000-6-39.
- Livingston, D. & Scott, D. (2014, January 25). Ohio house excuses schools, teachers for gun accidents. *Akron Beacon Journal*, Ohio News. Retrieved from http://publicpolicy.diosohio.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3163501
- Louw, D. A., Strydom, C. C., & Esterhuysen, K. G. F. (2005). Prediction of violent behavior: Professionals' appraisal. *Criminal Justice*, 5(4), 379-406. doi: 10.1177/1466802505057717.
- Macleod, M. (1997). Charles Whitman: The Texas bell tower sniper. Retrieved from http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/mass/whitman/index_1.html
- Martinez, M. A., Zeichner, A., Reidy, D. E., & Miller, J. D. (2008). Narcissism and displaced aggression: Effects of positive, negative, and delayed feedback. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44(1), 140-149.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. Forum: *Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), Art. 8. Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1428/3027>
- Maxfield, M. G. & Babbie, E. R. (2017). *Research methods for criminal justice and criminology*. (8th ed.) Boston, MA: Cengage.
- McGee, J. P., & DeBernardo, C. R. (1999). The classroom avenger. *Forensic Examiner*, 8(1), 16-18.
- Meindl, J. N. & Ivy, J. W. (2017). Mass shootings: The role of the media in promoting generalized imitation. *American Journal of Public Health*, 107(3), 368-370.
- Meloy, J. R. (2012). Predatory violence and psychopathy. In H. Hakkanen-Nyholm & J. Nyholms (Eds.), *Psychopathy and law: A practitioner's guide*, 30(1), 159-167. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Meloy, J. R., Hempel, A. G., Mohandie, K., Shiva, A. A., & Gray B. T. (2001). Offender and offense characteristics of a nonrandom sample of adolescent mass murderers. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(6), 719-728.
- Meloy, J. R., Hempel, A. G., Gray, B. T., Mohandie, K., Shiva, A. A., & Richards, T. (2004). A comparative analysis of North American adolescent and adult mass murderers. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 22(3), 291-309.
- Merriam, S. B. (2015). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (4th ed.) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milchan, A., Hamsher, J., Murphy, D., Mount, T., & Townsend, C. (Producers), & Stone, O. (Director). (1994). *Natural Born Killers* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Brothers pictures.
- Muschert, G. W. (2002), *Media and massacre: The social construction of the Columbine story*. Boulder, CO: University of Colorado.

- Muschert, G. W. (2007). Research in school shootings. *Sociology Compass*, 1(1), 60-80.
- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: A Pearson Education Inc.
- Newman, K., & Fox, C. (2009). Repeat tragedy: Rampage shootings in American high school and college settings, 2002-2008. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(9), 1286-1308.
- Newman, K., Fox, C., Harding, D., Mehta, J., & Roth, W. (2004). *Rampage: The social roots of school shootings*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Nurmi, J. (2012). Making sense of school shootings: Comparing local narratives of solidarity and conflict in Finland. *Traumatology*, 18(3), 16-28.
- Palermo, G. B., & Ross, L. E. (1999). Mass murder, suicide, and moral development: Can we separate the adults from the juveniles? *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 43(1), 8-20.
- Safarik, M. (2009). Experts: Many motives drive mass murderers. Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/id/30075905/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/experts-many-motives-drive-mass-murders/#.VDXXVJV0ymQ
- Schulman, A. N. (2017, November 18). How not to cover mass shootings. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-not-to-cover-mass-shootings-1510939088>.
- Schutt, R. K. (2011). *Investigating the social world: the process and practice of research*, (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Sexton-Radek, K. (2004). *Violence in schools: Issues, consequences, and expressions*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc.
- Shepard, C. (2002). Gunfire in halls of Columbine. A Columbine website retrieved from www.acolumbinesite.com/event/event1.html
- Siegel, L. J. (2008). *Criminology: The core* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Simon, M. K. (2011). *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success*. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success, LLC.
- Snow, R. L. (1996). *Swat teams: Explosive face-offs with America's deadliest criminals*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research: Perspectives on practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strasser, A. R. (2013). School posts sign warning that teachers are armed, gunmen will be 'met with deadly force'. Retrieved from <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2013/08/23/2515751/arkansas-armed-teacher-sign/>
- Sullum, J. (2014). Mass murder myths. *Reason*, 45(10), 16.
- Thio, A, Taylor, J. D., & Schwartz, M. D. (2012). *Deviant behavior*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Towers, S. Gomez-Lievano, A., Khan, M., Mubayi, A., & Castillo-Chavez, C. (2015). Contagion in mass killings and school shootings. (Doctoral dissertation) Retrieved from PLoS One database; 10(7). Doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0117259.
- U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services. (2013). The unity roadmap: A framework for preventing youth violence. Children's Safety Network publication. Retrieved from <https://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/webinar/unity-roadmap-framework-preventing-youth-violence>.

- U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center. (2002). The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States. Retrieved from: http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf
- Vossekuil, B., Fein, R., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2004). *The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- Willis, B. (2014). The advantages and limitations of single case study analysis. E-International Relations Students website. Retrieved from <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/07/05/the-advantages-and-limitations-of-single-case-study-analysis/>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zur, O. (2011). The major issues facing teenagers: Teen violence, school shootings, cyber-bullying, internet addiction, t.v. and gaming violence & teen suicide: Facts, ideas, and actions. Retrieved from <http://zurinstitute.com/teenviolence.html>

